

## Eight Steps to Better Paragraphing and a Clearer Essay

1. Next to each paragraph, write the main idea of the paragraph. Make sure that the main idea that you note is an idea (a point or argument), not a summary of the text.
2. Do individual paragraphs have more than one main idea? Divide them.
3. Do two paragraphs have the same main idea? Combine them.
4. Does the sequence of main ideas make sense? Reorganize the essay so that the main ideas are in logical order.
5. Is the main idea of each paragraph clearly stated in that paragraph? If not, state the main idea somewhere in the paragraph.
6. Does the paragraph clearly support your thesis? If not, add material that explains how it supports your thesis, or eliminate the paragraph.
7. Is the relationship between each pair of paragraphs clear? If not, write a transition that explains how one paragraph develops out of the previous one.
8. Check for material that does not fit the main idea of the paragraph that it is in. Move it to a more appropriate place in the essay, or eliminate it entirely.